

this has long been the quasi-official position of the Church, its simple assumption is still not an adequate critique of twentieth century thought.

A certain partiality here also seems indicated by the phrase "to recreate the Catholic pattern from the kaleidoscope of the post-conciliar Church"(p.122). The same stance is indicated by the inclusion, in so small a book about the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, of an 8-page appendix on "The Eucharist in Anglicanism" with its attack on the work of ARCIC.

The adoption of one particular letter of Pope John Paul II together with the writing of Von Balthasar, here elevated to the status of "the great contemporary 'Church Father'" (p.7), is all of a piece with the uncritical mixing, especially in chapters 5 and 6, of various theological opinions with the established doctrine of the Church. While the treatment of the Church's doctrine in this book purports to be historical, the method is in fact that of looking for—and at all costs finding—the doctrine of the Eucharist as developed and expressed by the Council of Trent constantly and explicitly stated throughout the preceding sixteen centuries as well as in the present day.

There are a few tiresome misprints in the text and one discourteous error. The eminent New Testament scholar, Professor C.K.Barrett, described on p. 9 as a Congregationalist is an ordained minister of the Methodist Church, who was prominent in opposing the Anglican-Methodist unity scheme in 1969.

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WOLF IN THE SHEEPFOLD: THE BIBLE AS A PROBLEM FOR CHRISTIANITY, Robert P. Carroll, SPCK, 1991, pp.xi + 159, £9.99.

'Familiarity with the long histories of Jewish, Christian, humanist and rationalist interpretations of the book in all its manifestations', has, he says, provided Dr Carroll, as he reconsiders the Bible, 'with a wide knowledge of the range of possible readings generated by individuals and communities over many centuries'. He writes, flatteringly, for 'the well-read reader', 'the intelligent reader', and for 'any competent reader'. His latest book, however, may well make even some of these somewhat uncomfortable. Those of a rueful countenance may feel yet again cheated by his so often referring to all those grand books they will not get to read: 'a book-length study could be written on this topic', 'it would take a much longer and a rather different book to spell out all the moves', 'the question of women is too big to handle here'. . . Those of a delicate literary stomach may deplore his fashionable street-talk of 'élitist disciples' and 'élites who put the biblical books together', of an inescapably 'gendered reference' to 'Church Fathers', of 'the inside-leg measurements of their god', and of the 'post-modernist magical realism' of *Satanic Verses*. . . . They may not care, either, for his finding *Isaiah* 6.9–10 'very tricky', or his suggestion 'Try reading *John* 8', which also proves 'tricky', or his quick gloss on *1 Thessalonians* 2.14–16 as Paul's

declaring that 'the killing of Jesus did the trick'. Those of a docile temper will certainly be disturbed by the violence of Dr Carroll's anger against the conventions of 'biblical christianity'.

Dr Carroll is enraged generally by the Church's harnessing of the Hebrew Bible with the New Testament, text with revisionist critique, and then of both with philosophical theology, narrative fictions with abstracting analytics. He roars, particularly, against the perverting views taken of others by New Testament writers and Church-going readers.

'The deathcamps of the Hitler war raise too many painful issues for an adequate discussion here', but Dr Carroll judges that the evangelists have some culpability for the horrors of anti-semitism in our culture. Their distortions have forwarded so terrible a christian history that in time 'the number of murdered Jews would belittle the crucifixion itself'. And if any modern christian hope to make some apology for *John* 8.44 or *Matthew* 27.25 by reference to those jewish persecutors described in *Acts*, Dr Carroll is ready with a dismissal of such propagandist departures from historical accuracy: 'I do not think that viewpoint can be sustained by argument'.

Dr Carroll's fury is rather less ferociously expressed when he addresses christian condemnations of homosexual activity. 'It would take another book' to discuss the uses to which christians have put *Leviticus* 19.19 and 20.9 and 'Paul's paean to the wrath of God' in *Romans* 1. But if anti-semitism is in large part due to a failure of christian writers, 'the anti-homosexual brigade' represents a failure of christian readers. They have selectively decided that their 'queer-bashing' has a biblical sanction, whilst cheerfully putting aside the *Leviticus* condemnation of garments 'made of two kinds of stuff': 'check the labels on your Marks and Spencer's clothing'. We should remind ourselves that the *Leviticus* bans reflect the 'ideological control' which 'élites among ancient peoples' were imposing upon their societies. And if the Elders of New Testament communities were against homosexuality that was because they were against all sexuality, 'the book never advocates heterosexual behaviour either'. Dr Carroll remarks that 'a recent Pope' was perfectly in accord with the tradition of these Elders when he included 'over-eager sex with one's wife' within the category of 'adultery'.

'A far greater range of paradigmatic issues could have been discussed'. It is a sign, despite his references to 'the Billy Grahams' and 'Jerry Falwell *autographing* copies of the Bible' and 'telly-goons' and the 'immortal' *Catcher in the Rye*, of Dr Carroll's european rather than transatlantic occupation, that he does not take up some peculiar christian versions of biblical 'creationism' and 'monogenism'. These, too, exhibit that recontextualization of other people's texts. And they have generated their especial, self-comforting, angry, ideologies. Dr Carroll has, however, made very plain for all english-readers how much more sorrowing he is than angry at the general refusal of christians to recognise that coming upon a book of the Bible may be the occasion of fundamental challenge. 'You must change your life'.

Here, he writes a little hurriedly, making some odd slips in remarks about Augustine, Bunyan, and Newman, but, in another book, he might usefully, and more cheerfully, elucidate those moments when Augustine obeyed a 'Tolle. lege', when Bunyan started from a dream of a man with a book in his hand, and when Newman, refusing to take the Bible as 'a magazine of texts on behalf of our own opinions', accepted that he must change often. Dr Carroll might write, too, of the analytic Aquinas discerning each patriarchal narrative to be revealing a human turn towards the unchanging God, of the revisionist Handel reading the male, militarist, tribal, story of Jephtha as the divine offer of a virgin sign of grace, and, if he still require an example of what we ordinary folk mean by our talk of 'biblical christianity', he might reconsider the works of Jowett, that most interesting of all nineteenth-century theologians, and meditate upon his arrangements for the Long Vacation Term at Balliol: 'like the first Christians we take all our meals in common and in hall. It is very pleasant and sociable, and a novelty in Oxford'.

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THE EARTH BENEATH—A CRITICAL GUIDE TO GREEN THEOLOGY
edited by Ian Ball, Margaret Goodall, Clare Palmer and John Reader.
SPCK, 1992. pp.216 £15

ETHICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT edited by CGW Taylor. *Corpus Christi College, Oxford* 1992. pp. 97. £5.

Both of these books are the product of the rich humus of conference talk. The first is an expanded collection from Ripon College, Cuddesdon, the second a home produced desk top publication from Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

The Earth Beneath claims to be a critical guide to green theology but, as the introduction presages, 'Beneath the surface (of the environment debate) is a question about the identity of humanity itself. What are we meant to be and become? Where does humanity fit into the total picture of creation?' As a result most of the articles are of a sociological nature, with one or two interesting ideas, borrowed from Habermas or psychotherapy and allied to the usual assaults on the consumerist and industrial mentality.

What theology there is in the book is rightly critical of Matthew Fox ('Why he fails to change the world'), insufficiently critical of Teilhard de Chardin and persuasively critical of stewardship, which is likened to management (although without mention of Genesis 1:26). However the seemingly inevitable self questioning which pervades this book and maybe the Anglican church, means that we are left hanging without a doctrine of God at all—and the worry that like Matthew Fox we are all entertainers.

This book is a superb example of the modern (Reformed) attempts to rediscover traditional Christianity in the name of radicalism: there are

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